

Hold Your Ground by Aceofstars16

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Summary:

After getting beat up twice, it's about time Steve learns how to fight properly, and who better to teach him than Hopper?

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Author's Note:

[Tumblr post](#)

“I know how to fight!”

Steve stared at Hopper and then at the kids who were grinning at each other, he could’ve sworn Lucas even hid a snicker behind his hand.

“No, you don’t. Last year Jonathan beat you up and this year you got beat up again. You clearly don’t know how to fight. At least not well.”

This time Steve did hear a laugh, but he didn’t look in time to see who it was. “How come no one else has to learn?”

“I’m not going to teach kids how to fight. You on the other hand are far too old not to know how to hold your own. Now, enough talking,” Hopper nodded to the bag that had been tied to a tree branch. “Show me what you got.”

Holding back a sigh, Steve looked at the bag, then at Hopper before punching it. He was expecting it to move from the hit, but it didn’t move an inch. The only thing that happened was a sharp pain shooting through his fist.

“Sheesh, what the heck is wrong with this thing?!?”

“Nothing. It’s your punch that’s the problem. Look closely.”

Rubbing his fist, Steve watched as Hopper placed a few punches at the bag, resulting in it moving from side to side.

“Got it?”

“Yeah, sure,” Steve muttered before he moved towards the bag again this time really putting as much force as he could into his swings. The good news: the bag moved a little. The bad news: his hands were

throbbing now.

“Kid.”

“I’m not a kid!”

“Yeah, well you punch like one.”

“Hey!” One of the kids – Lucas by the sound of it – piped in but Hopper waved it off.

“Look, it’s not about the power, it’s about how you use that power. You have to aim, and hit the right spots, especially if you want to take someone down hard and fast. Now, are you actually going to copy me or are you just going to keep hitting it as hard as you can?”

A groan built up in Steve’s throat but he motioned towards the bag. This was going to be a long afternoon...

It was, in fact, a long afternoon, then a long weekend, then a long week. Hopper seemed keen on making sure Steve knew every way to punch and the best way to utilize your opponent’s weaknesses. It was infuriating at times, but Steve had to admit it did make sense, and at least he could manage to hit the bag without murdering his hands in the process.

However, the work really paid off when Hopper insisted on him trying out his knowledge on an actual person. Steve didn’t know why Jonathan agreed to it, but the next week they were circling around in the woods, gloved fists raised.

“Remember, this is just to practice. The goal isn’t to bloody up the other person, just knock them down.” Hopper watched from the sidelines and waited until they nodded before signaling the start.

Steve’s first instinct was to strike, get the first blow in, but he held back, waiting to see what Jonathan would do.

A punch that was all too obvious. Hey, maybe Hopper’s lessons had actually taught him something.

Another punch that Steve blocked before returning it, hitting

Jonathan's shoulder.

"Come on Steve!" Dustin's voice came from the side of the 'ring' that had been circled out.

"Come on Jonathan!" Will called out - of course he would be rooting for his brother.

In that moment, Steve was distracted and Jonathan managed a blow to his chest. Shaking it off, Steve narrowed his eyes. Time to focus and take this seriously.

The fight blurred together, one hit after another. Blocking, dodging, feinting, Steve used all the tricks Hopper had been teaching him, testing them out on a real opponent who was legitimately fighting back. Only when sweat started forming on his brow did Steve realize this had gone on long enough, it was time to try a finishing move.

A feint, then a hard strike to the jaw. The movement was quick and the next second Jonathan was on the ground.

A smile grew on Steve's face as he took off his gloves and looked at the kids, returning Dustin's thumbs up as he did so. Then he turned and helped Jonathan up before looking at Hopper who nodded.

"Not bad. A little long but better than before. Who knows, if you keep working on it you might just be cop material."

Steve froze at the words, not quite sure what to make of them. Ever since he had gotten his rejection letter for college, he had pretty much accepted that he would work for his dad. But maybe, he could do something else with his life. He wasn't sure if being a cop was really what he had in mind but...it wasn't the worst option.

"It was just a thought, kid, no need to look so shocked."

"Uh, sorry I just...never thought about being a cop. That's all."

"That's be awesome!" Dustin said, walking up, grinning. "You'd make a great cop!"

“Uh...sure thing, kid,” Steve said, rustling Dustin’s hat as a way to distract himself from a future he had never considered before.

“So, you want to keep training?” Hopper asked, glancing at Jonathan as he added. “You’re free to join in too.”

Jonathan was quick to shake his head. “I think I’m good, but I’ll spar anytime you need it.”

“Steve?”

It was one of the few times Hopper had actually called him by his name and it jerked him back into reality. A small smile formed on his mouth as he nodded slowly. “Yeah...sure, I’ll give it a go.”